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BOOK REVIEWS

American Education. By A. S. DRAPER. With an introduction by NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. Pp. x+383. \$2.00 net.

The author of this volume has been a conspicuous leader in American education for a quarter of a century at least. He has had unusually wide experience as an administrator, alike of elementary and of higher educational systems. As a public speaker upon educational questions he has had few equals in this country, and he has been called upon constantly to address teachers as well as laymen upon a great variety of subjects relating to teaching, from the kindergarten to the graduate school of the university. The volume before us comprises twenty-six addresses dealing with problems of organization and administration, and with teaching in the elementary school, the secondary school, the college, and the university. In addition there are included seven addresses upon various subjects of a general character such as "The Spirit of the Teacher," "The Schools and International Peace," "The Farm and the School," "Public Morals and Public Schools," etc. In reading these addresses one realizes that some of them were delivered quite recently, while others were written a number of years ago, and have not been brought down to date in every detail. Certain criticisms upon tendencies in our schools are hardly applicable to present-day conditions. For instance, the author neglects no opportunity to make sport of certain phases of the child-study movement in its inception. He condemns the collecting of statistics upon unimportant topics by teachers in service, and he derides the questionnaire method of solving educational problems. This criticism seems to be of importance mainly for historical purposes, since the practices complained of have almost entirely disappeared from American schools.

Mr. Draper's point of view is, of course, that of the administrator. He views American education as a whole. He has been interested in solving problems connected with making great complex systems work. His attention has not been attracted strongly to the detailed problems connected with teaching in the classroom, or even with the making of a curriculum, though problems pertaining to studies in elementary and secondary schools receive some attention in this volume. But one feels that what might be called the scientific processes of teaching does not get the expert handling which is very evident in the treatment of questions of organization and supervision, particularly of large educational systems. When the author discusses "unsettled questions" he does not think at all of the problems which would first occur to the teacher who is trying to make his instruction in any particular subject effective, or who is struggling to find out what the nature of the children before him is, when they naturally become interested in different studies, whether it would be better to restrain them absolutely in the schoolroom or to give them a large measure of freedom, and so on *ad libitum*. It is interesting to speculate on what such

men as President Hall, and Professors Dewey, Thorndike, Bagley, DeGarmo, Suzzallo, Snedden, Kirkpatrick, Horne, McMurry, Miller, Swift, Scott, Hanus, Chamberlain, and other writers on education would set down as "unsettled questions" in teaching. It is certain they would not think of most of the questions which alone have attracted the attention of Mr. Draper. This simply shows how vastly complex our American educational work has become, for all these problems of administration as well as those of actual instruction are, of course, of immense importance.

The present writer feels that Mr. Draper's book interprets the general ideals of American education, regarded from an administrative point of view, more effectively and pleasingly than has been done heretofore. The style of the book is cultivated and at the same time dynamic. The treatment throughout is concrete and to the point. There is no soaring into the air, or declaiming for the sake simply of making a noise in the world. The impression the book as a whole and in detail makes on one is that the author is talking "horse sense," at least most of the time. Of course, he is conservative. Men who are responsible for administering great systems are bound to look with suspicion upon revolutionary suggestions. Once the machinery is got going, the business of the administrator is mainly to resist innovations which might throw it out of order. The man who is working on the inside with some little part of the machinery often thinks a change would be a good thing. He can see that improvements could be made in the tools he is handling, and he does not stop to consider what would happen to the machine as a whole if the changes he desires should be made. But the superintendent of the entire plant does not want to take the chances of having to remodel his whole establishment if he should change any particular part thereof. The radicals in American education are not as a rule the administrators; at least not the men who have to deal with such large systems as Mr. Draper has had to do.

While conservative in tone, still there is manifest throughout this book a spirit of progress. The ideals presented are sane and virile; and so far as the present writer can tell, they represent truly the general character and spirit of our educational philosophy. But it ought to be noted that whenever Mr. Draper touches upon educational problems of a scientific character he shows he is wandering in unfamiliar regions. For instance, in discussing coeducation he says (p. 228) that there are no differences between men and women which should make their education divergent. "Physiological, psychological, and social difficulties exist only in imagination." Now, in the light of present-day biological, psychological, and sociological science, such a statement as this makes one pause. But propositions of this sort are to be looked for perhaps from those who deal with things in the large, and who have neither the patience, the disposition, nor the desire to work them out in a detailed, scientific way.

The only other views which Mr. Draper expresses, and which seem to the present writer to show misunderstanding and even prejudice, are those which relate to the child-study movement, already referred to. One could not expect a person of Mr. Draper's temperament and interests to be much in love with the methods of child-study; but it might reasonably be expected that he would be willing to recognize the beneficial results which have already issued from that movement. Mr. Draper's point of view is largely historical, which

adds greatly to the clarity, sanity, and helpfulness of his treatment of educational questions. One cannot help wondering then why he does not see that the work in child-study which he ridicules has already produced profound changes in the theory of American education, and also in its practice in many sections of the country. That movement has set in operation forces which are transforming American schools in respect to the actual processes of teaching. Of course, the movement has not much influenced the administration of education, as Mr. Draper has been interested in it. It has had to deal with minute details, wherein lie the real secrets of success in teaching. To one who is dealing with matters in a big way, this minute work seems trivial. But right here has been the chief trouble with education from Plato down. Men have been unwilling to apply themselves to the detection of those infinitesimal factors which in co-operation lead to success or failure in education. Mr. Draper's treatment of this subject is wholly unsatisfactory, and out of accord with the general spirit and method of his book, which so effectively shows how our present system has come to be what it is.

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Laggards in Our Schools: A Study of Retardation and Elimination in City School Systems. By LEONARD P. AYRES. New York: Charities Publication Co., 1909. Pp. 120. \$1.50.

This is a book which all school superintendents and principals should have within easy access for ready reference and reading, and it contains many valuable conclusions with which every teacher should be familiar. It is the second of a series of "backward children investigations" published by the Russell Sage Foundation, which undertook in the fall of 1907 to study "the adaptability of the school and its grades to children." The predominant interest of the investigation "was not in the individual, subnormal, or atypical child, but rather in the large class, varying with local conditions from 5 to 75 per cent. of all the children in our schools, who are older than they should be for the grades they are in." The object was to answer the questions, "How many of the children in our schools fail to make normal progress from grade to grade, and why do they fail? How many of the children drop out of school before finishing the elementary course, and why do they drop out? What are the facts and what are the remedies?" This present volume discusses these questions under the general headings: (1) "Conditions," (2) "Causes," and (3) "Remedies."

The subjects discussed under "Conditions" are retardation—"retarded children are those who are older than they should be for the grades in which they are found"—and elimination—"the falling out of children before completing the course." Chap. ii calls attention to the significance of these problems and gives in general the method of studying the relative distribution of the 1,982,477 children enrolled in the public schools of fifty-eight cities of the United States.

Chap. iii discusses factors affecting grade distribution. Allowing for the